STRATEGISTS BREAK ALL THE RULES

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    The assumption made sense for the United States but had one unfortunate result. The Army as an institution misread the nature of an apolitical force. The essence of an apolitical force should be non-partisan – Army professionals above political interference or interest. There is a difference, however, between policy and politics. While not involving itself in the political life of the nation, the Army is vitally concerned with the policies of the nation. The discussion strategists must prepare for are political, but in the nature of – policy as the object of war.

    A historical survey of strategists from General Winfield Scott to General Creighton Abrams suggests that the most successful strategists are life-long learners. They build holistic understanding of the interdependent and infinite connections of the whole problem. Once they develop a hypothesis about the whole problem, they reshape those connections to create a better peace for the United States. Strategists that take time to understand the whole problem encourage discourse.

    Retaining the Functional Area 59 Strategist program will continue to benefit the force because they do not follow a traditional route to generalship. After all, few have earned stars by arguing, debating, and taking intellectual risk.

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Abstract

STRATEGISTS BREAK ALL THE RULES by MAJ Adelaido Godinez, III, U.S. Army, 42 pages.

Emory Upton believed that politicians should leave war to professionals. This led to two assumptions that became conventional wisdom: first, an apolitical army represented a more professional force; and second, the problems at the tactical and operational level were similar enough to be useful in developing strategic thinking. These assumptions resulted in what Samuel P. Huntington described as the "normal-theory" relationship between policy-makers and generals.

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Introduction

In the May 2007 issue of *Armed Forces Journal*, then Lt. Col. Paul Yingling, U.S. Army, asserted that a crisis existed in America's Army. "A Failure in Generalship" reopened a persistent debate within the Army about whether the Army develops and promotes strategic thinking. Yingling argued, "[O]ur generals failed to envision the conditions of future combat and prepare their forces accordingly."[1] He outlined that despite the peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and other stability-type operations over the past twenty years, the Army's leadership failed to recognize change and build institutional capacity: structurally, doctrinally, or educationally. Instead, the institution largely focused on tactical scenarios that replicated high-intensity conflict and complicated operational movement and sustainment problems. Lt. Col. Yingling suggested that the Army lacked the mental agility to recognize the difference between the wars the Army wants to fight and the wars that U.S. politicians decide to fight.

Yingling's central insight is that structure, professionalism, and deliberate specialization in the Army led to a bifurcated approach to war: politicians decided on war and then left it to be won by the military experts. This divergence produced two pieces of conventional wisdom in debates about U.S. military and civilian relationships: First, that an apolitical army represented a more professional force; and second, the problems at the tactical and operational level were similar enough to be useful to develop strategic thinking. These assumptions resulted in what Samuel P. Huntington described as the "normal-theory" relationship between policy-makers and generals.

These assumptions beg the question of how strategists in the U.S. Army have performed, if they have gotten it right, and if so, why did they get it right? This monograph will trace American strategists' performance from before the Progressive Era, the Progressive movement

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[1] Paul Yingling, "A Failure in Generalship," *Armed Forces Journal*, May 2007, http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/05/2635198, accessed on 10 October 2011.

between 1860s to World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and conclude with observations from the current operational environment. The professionalization movement, initiated by Emory Upton after the Civil War and accelerated by Secretary of War Elihu Root, led the U.S. Army to overly focus on tactical problems and operational problems and the maintenance of the institutional U.S. Army instead of educating officers on how to take a holistic approach to war.

This monograph posits that gradually, the professionalization of the military, accelerated by the industrial era, narrowed officer's training and education to focus on technical, tactical, and operational problems. For most of the pre-Root reform era, the U.S. Army was little more than a frontier constabulary with few strategic concerns. Partly because of a long-standing American social and political distrust of a large standing Army, the only significant war functions were the requirements to raise, train, and lead mass conscript or volunteer forces in the event of real war.[2] The irony of a small standing Army was that its size led to stronger relationships between general officers and their political masters.

Historically, the Progressive Era occurred as a response to industrialization just after the Civil War between the 1860s to the early 1900s. During this period, Emory Upton developed and wrote a concept about how best to professionalize the U.S. Army, with the underlying intent to leave warfighting to professionals. Elihu Root codified many of his ideas after the failures in the Spanish-American War of 1898. The broad campaign to reform America socially, politically, and economically matched Secretary of War Elihu Root's move to institutionalize and professionalize the Army. The Root reforms, accelerated by industrialization and technology, created a highly specialized U.S. Army that focused on gaining, maintaining, and improving tactical and operational competence and cemented the fundamental assumption that an apolitical army was more useful for the United States.

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[2] David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing (Pivotal Moments in American History)* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2006), 201.

The assumption made sense for the United States but had one unfortunate result. The Army as an institution misread the nature of an apolitical force. The essence of an apolitical force should be non-partisan – Army professionals above political interference or interest. There is a difference, however, between policy and politics. While not involving itself in the political life of the nation, the Army is vitally concerned with the policies of the nation. The discussion strategists must prepare for are political, but in the nature of – policy as the object of war. The U.S. Army confused apolitical with policy in the manner in which Carl von Clausewitz addressed.

The poor performance of the War Department during the Spanish-American War stimulated the call for reform. The resulting Root Reforms emphasized the need to develop a professional force prepared to fight modern war. The industrial age created conditions that were more complex in which the technical aspects of warfare seemed dominant. Warfare was changing and it seemed to demand a greater emphasis on technical and tactical skills. Caught up in this age of reform and emphasis on professionalization, the Army groomed and promoted technically competent tacticians, assuming that genius would emerge as they entered the strategic and political realm. This resulted in general officers unprepared to conduct a meaningful conversation about how to translate political objectives into military campaigns.

As United States' prestige and interests grew abroad, "the military profession has emerged in its most pure form, as a group of technically and organizationally trained experts in the management of violence."[3] Although successful in World War II and having carried that success to the beginning of the Korean War, the U. S. Army entered a period of relatively static strategic conditions. The specter of thermonuclear war dominated the strategic discourse. In the post-Cold War era, the Army lapsed into strategic drift as it tried to understand the requirements

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[3] Bengt Abrahamsson, *Military Professionalization and Political Power* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc, 1972), 12

for limited war and eventually an all-volunteer force. Locked into the assumption of the apolitical U.S. Army, the political choice to leave Vietnam destroyed the Army's limited successes there.

At the end of the Cold War some Army leaders recognized that a new era world require more strategic thinking. In 1989, General John R. Galvin noted the problem and asked, "[h]ow do we get as broad a leavening of strategic thinkers as possible?"[4] Then the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. European Command, General Galvin approached the problem from an educational, institutional, and specialization perspective. General Galvin expected changes in the way the Army educated and promoted its officers. His comments anticipated an intellectual approach to developing strategic thinkers for the complexities of modern warfare in the post-Cold War era. General Galvin wanted the Army to change its culture and develop a structured approach to growing strategic thinkers.

Instead, the Army maintained its tactical and operational bias and chose an organizational approach that developed a specialized group of competent Strategists called Functional Area 59. Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. Moore, then serving as the Basic Strategic Arts Program director, rekindled General Galvin's essay hoping to inform both military and civilian readers that the Army's initial step to develop competent strategic thinkers was succeeding. The FA59 program solved the Army's crisis in strategic thinkers and the "United States…long decline in strategic competence."[5] The Army's experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, Asia-Pacific, and on the Southwest Border suggests a different perspective. Perhaps, four hundred strategists serving in positions throughout the Army and the rest of the Interagency is not enough. The real requirement of strategists does not offset senior leaders requirement to think strategically.

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[4] John R. Galvin, "What's the Matter with Being a Strategist?" *Parameters*, 19 (March 1989), 2-10.

[5] Charles P. Moore, "What's the Matter with Being a Strategist (Now)?" *Parameters*, Winter 2009-10, Vol., No. (Army War College, Carlisle, PA.: Winter 2009-10), 18.

There seems to be a thread of belief from this recent analysis that the professional military educational system (PME) is ineffective in producing officers that can think critically and creatively to solve complex, ill-structured problems.[6] The apparent difference between problem sets at the tactical level and at the strategic level requires deeper analysis. The difference appears to develop from the admixture of policy at the strategic level. The strategist's problem is the whole mess of interacting, interdependent actors, and their associated agendas with an innumerable set of theories of victory.[7]

There were long-term impacts upon strategic thinking from the transition of a small, cadre-like volunteer force reinforced by a quickly trained militia to a more professional Army during the Progressive era. Professionalization of the Army led to a loss of strategic perspective and an inability to connect long-term strategic-political objectives to operations. The continued professionalization of the U.S. Army, established during the Progressive era, narrowed the perspective and resulted in officers unprepared to deal with ill-structured political-military problems by removing the political object of war from the warrior's purview.

This monograph proceeds in four sections. The first section discusses definitions and concepts related to strategic thinking. The second section provides a narrative analysis of strategic thinking in the U.S. Army. The third section links the conclusions identified from the analysis. The last section provides initial thoughts on recommendations for the U.S. Army to improve strategic thinking.

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[6] Department of the Army, *The Operations Process: FM 5-0* (GPO, March 2010), 3-5. FM 5-0 explicitly outlines the requirement for learning, innovation, and adapting as a requirement of critical thinking. J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure: A Study of the Personal Factor in Command* (Harrisburg, P.A.:Military Service Printing, Co.), 55-56. General Galvin explicitly attacks the responsibility of senior leaders to develop competent strategic thinkers in his *Parameters* article.

[7] Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: a Platform For Designing Business Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, MA.: Morgan Kaufmann, 2011), 92.

Definitions and Concepts

There are many works on strategy, war, warfare, and what those terms mean. This paper derives an understanding of strategic thinking from the work of Dr. Everett Carl Dolman's work *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age*.[8] Dr. Leonard Wong's work reflects the same episodic developments in professionalism and will help scope how the Root reforms influenced professionalism.[9] The following discussion outlines the current military definitions and why Dolman's concept of strategy provides greater utility than current military doctrine.

Defining key terms provides a useful foundation for understanding the Army's struggle with strategic thought. Arguably, strategic thinking exists beyond levels of war. Strategic thinking involves critical and creative thinking to create a theory of action around the infinite connections, their continuation, and how to reshape them into a better peace. Hew Strachan argues that strategy has lost its meaning because "[t]he word 'strategy' has acquired a universality which has robbed it of meaning."[10] The Army defines strategy as "[t]he art and science of developing and employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national and/or multinational objectives."[11] The Army definition illustrates logic that strategic thinking revolves around allocating resources to achieve a specific goal. Joint doctrine describes strategy in a different way. Strategy is, "a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the

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[8] Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age*, New ed. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 4.

[9] Don Snider and Lloyd Matthews, *The Future of the Army Profession, Revised and Expanded Second Edition*, (Boston: Learning Solutions, 2005), 95.

[10] Hew Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," *Survival*, vol. 47, no 3, Autumn 2005, 34, (accessed on November 14, 2011).

[11] US Army, FM 1-02 *Operational terms and Graphics* (GPO, 2004), 1-178.

instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives."[12]

The similarity to the definition of tactics illustrates the U.S. Army's misunderstanding of strategic thinking. At the tactical level, "battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces."[13] The tautological fallacy is that tactics accomplish specific goals at a lower level by allocating resources (battles and engagements). In an effort to show a difference in planning at the various levels doctrine states that, "[a]ctivities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives."[14]

The problem with the U.S. military's definitions is that they center on a circular argument of resources at any level of war – instead of attempting to understand the policy objectives of war. Add in the concept of operational art as "the pursuit of the strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose," and it is easy to understand how complicated levels of war and technology make strategic thinking.[15] These definitions inhibit strategic thinking because they limit the Army from taking a holistic approach to war. Tactical and operational problems tend to be either self-evident or easier for professionals to agree on a desired end state.[16] Strategic problems involve relationships between political objects and desired conditions. Strategy is more holistic and interdependent in nature.[17]

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[12] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms: Joint Publication 1-02* (GPO, 2011), 349.

[13] Ibid., 1-182.

[14] Ibid., 1-182.

[15] US Army, ADP 3-0 *Unified Land Operations* (GPO, 10 October 2011), 9.

[16] F.M. 5-0, C1, 2-4.

[17] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 75-122. Clausewitz spent all of Book One explaining the interconnectedness of war.

The pursuit of the political object in war often represents an ill-structured problem. Army Field Manual 5-0 describes problems as well-structured, medium-structured, or ill-structured. Well-structured problems are self-evident problems with solutions readily available. Tactics manuals, technological solutions, or professionals agree on relevant solutions to well-structured or medium-structured problems.[18] In contrast, ill-structured problems are interactive, "complex, nonlinear, and dynamic" type problems with no shared agreement on solutions, desired conditions, end states, or achievability.[19]

Strategic problems are the most interactive of problems because of their interdependent nature. The infinite connections and continuous reshaping requires leaders to approach strategic problems from a holistic perspective. Strategic thinking and strategy is rooted in thinking about creating self-sustaining conditions from these infinite connections. Typically, for the U.S. Army, initial political guidance "may prove insufficient to create clearly stated, decisive, and attainable objectives in complex situations that involve political, social, economic, and other factors."[20] Strategic thinking must recognize that strategic problems are inherently ill-structured because of the admixture of politics, economics, social, and other systems. These various systems are highly interactive producing extremely unpredictable conditions.[21] Therefore, strategic thinking must include how to learn, innovate, and adapt to generate a hypothesis about how to get to the political object.

Above all, strategic thinking should be useful. The U.S. Army's PME system educates officers to succeed at the tactical and operational level. Unfortunately, as General Galvin explained, "we need young strategists because we need senior strategists, and we need a lot

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[18] F.M. 5-0, 2-4.

[19] Ibid., 2-4.

[20] Ibid., 3-5.

[21] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Rev. ed. (New York: Currency, 2006), 71.

because when the time comes we need *enough*."[22] The Army's approach to promoting the most promising grand tacticians to strategic roles expects their tactical and operational experiences to translate to effective strategic thinking. Dr. Dolman highlights the differences in the two types of thinking in his book *Pure Strategy*.

> And so here is found the crucial difference between strategists and tacticians. The tactical thinker seeks an answer. And while coming to a conclusion can be the beginning of action, it is too often the end of critical thinking. The strategist will instead search for the right question; those to which the panorama of possible answers provides insight and spurs ever more questions. No solutions are possible in this construct, only working hypotheses that the strategist knows will one day be proven false or tossed aside. Strategy is thus an unending process that can never lead to conclusion. And this is the way it should be: *continuation* is the goal of strategy – not *culmination*.[23]

Dolman goes on to explain that military strategists must discard victory, because strategic thinking is about continuation. The outcomes of battles and campaigns anticipate victory and a clear end to campaigns. Strategic thinking seeks to create conditions and institutions that maintain a new normal because of the new political object. Britain's WWII strategy of defense, dependent on maritime strength, until the United States joined the fight against Germany depicts just how, "[b]attles and wars may end, but interaction between individuals and states goes on, and 'one can no more achieve final victory than one can 'win' history."[24] Strategists create hypothesis to explain how to move from the current condition to Carl von Clausewitz's, "*political object of the war*."[25] Grand tacticians, on the other hand, are typically implementing approved theories and principles. This difference cannot be understated.

Developing a holistic understanding of the environment helps develop a strategic perspective instead of an action oriented, solutions approach. Successful strategic thinking therefore requires learning, innovation, and ultimately organizational adaptation because the

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[22] Galvin, 84.

[23] Dolman, 4.

[24] Ibid, 6.

[25] Clausewitz, 80. Emphasis in original.

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political object shifts, the conditions change, or a unique opportunity presents itself but time does not stop. Operational brilliance focuses on action to retain the initiative. The action-oriented culture remains critical to success at the operational and tactical levels, but the strategic level takes a learned, theoretical approach to problem solving.[26]

German successes during the world wars at the tactical and operational levels of war and ultimate strategic failure illustrate this truth. As Holger Herwig points out, "[i]t is a well-known adage that no amount of operational or tactical dexterity can overcome a flawed policy-strategy match."[27]

Dr. Ronald Heifetz explains that because strategy requires testing of an unproven hypothesis, leadership must recognize the limitations of training and induce learning.[28] Field Manual 5-0 supports this assertion because of the ambiguity of political or military guidance. Strategic thinkers have to see the infinite connections and develop an acceptable theory that reshapes those connections to the benefit of the nation. That means more learning and more testing of that learning is required for strategists.

If Dr. Dolman is right and strategy is about getting "*a better condition of peace*" – then operations and tactics are the means for testing the strategist's hypothesis.[29] Carl von Clausewitz describes an example of a strategist, Fredrick the Great, used the campaign in 1760 to test a hypothesis about bringing "Silesia into the safe harbor of a fully guaranteed peace."[30]

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[26] Galvin, 85.

[27] Holger H. Herwig, "Military Strategy in War and Peace: Some Conclusions," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* (Volume 13, Issue 1, Fall 2010), 128, http://www.ciaonet.org.lumen.cgsccarl.com/journals/jomass/v13i1/f_0021098_17534.pdf (accessed February 9, 2012).

[28] Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 75. Also, see FM 5-0, 3-5.

[29] Dolman, 15. Emphasis in original.

[30] Clausewitz, 179. Emphasis in original.

What is really admirable is the King's wisdom: pursing a major objective with limited resources, he did not try to undertake anything beyond his strength, but always *just enough* to get him what he wanted. This campaign was not the only one in which he demonstrated his judgment as a general. It is evident in all the three wars fought by the great King.

Fredrick the Great's genius comes not from a final victory and destroyed enemy. His genius comes from a holistic understanding of the problem to use just enough force to take Silesia.

Also critical to this discussion are the definitions of professionalism and the professional mind. Dr. Leonard Wong wrote a useful historical view of the U.S. Army's professionalization process. Tellingly, Dr. Wong separates the amateur U.S. Army from the professional U.S. Army by the Elihu Root reforms, as well. Placing the U.S. Army's profession in context, Dr. Wong argued that before the Root reforms, "the Army as a profession emerged to embrace any tasks levied by the American people that necessitated the deployment of trained, disciplined manpower under austere conditions on behalf of the nation."[31] Although the army existed to fight and win the nation's wars, the early army officer understood his role in serving the political needs of the developing nation. Dr. Wong pressed that the debacle of quartermaster support during the Spanish-American War, the rise as colonial power, and the industrial age led to Elihu Root's opportunity to expand the Army profession.[32] Revealingly, Dr. Wong concluded that the Army's profession necessarily "evolve[s] in tandem with the evolving panoply of needs that require the application of disciplined force in 'service to the American people.'"[33]

The U.S. Army cannot focus on only traditional military matters. Most academics have accepted Clausewitz's thesis that war is political discourse by other means. Senior military members and U.S. politicians believe that U.S. Army officers must be apolitical in all facets to be

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[31] Snider, 95.

[32] Ibid., 98-100.

[33] Ibid., 109.

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a professional – confusing the inherent nature of strategic problems because they involve matters of policy.

Strategic Theory

Strategic theory provides a framework for assessing and identifying good strategists. The works of Carl von Clausewitz influence the way the U.S. Army thinks about war in many ways. Clausewitz presents two criteria, which provides structure for a narrative analysis of the following historical surveys. First, *On War* highlights the primacy of politics. Second, *On War* reveals that strategists must see problems holistically.[34] These two criteria reflect the problems with the two assumptions the U.S. Army makes about developing strategic thinkers.

The two assumptions the U.S. Army made led to a bifurcated approach to war. The first assumption is that an apolitical army represents a more professional force. The second assumption is that the problems at the tactical and operational level were similar enough to be useful to develop strategic thinkers. General John R. Galvin explains that a strategist must "develop an understanding of politics and the political process, for the objectives of strategy and the environments in which it is formulated are political."[35] It is only then that strategists see the problem of war holistically.

Carl von Clausewitz was in his early twenties when he first started thinking and writing about the nature of war and the relationship between war, society, and politics. With the French Revolution in full tilt, the young Prussian gained personal experience fighting the armies of Revolutionary France. His experience in battle led Clausewitz to three conclusions. First, there was no standard by which to measure excellence in war. Second, it was a mistake to believe that a set of rules led to mastery in war. Third, he recognized that war appeared as a political

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[34] Clausewitz, 161.

[35] Galvin, 88.

phenomenon.[36] These three insights led Clausewitz to write a general theory of war with abstract

criteria for use by contemporary and future practitioners of war.

The first criterion Clausewitz presented revolves around the primacy of politics. Dr. Peter

Paret described, through an exchange between Clausewitz and the Chief of the Prussian General

Staff's plan review request, how strongly Clausewitz felt about the primacy of politics.

> War is not an independent phenomenon, but the continuation of politics by different
> means. Consequently, the main lines of every major strategic plan are *largely political*
> *in nature*, and their political character increases the more the plan applies to the entire
> campaign and to the whole state. A war plan results directly from the political
> conditions of the two warring states, as well as from their relations to third
> powers…[a]ccording to this point of view, there can be no question of *purely military*
> evaluation of a great strategic issue, nor of a purely military scheme to solve it.[37]

Clausewitz believed that politics provides the rationale for war. Linking violence or

threat of violence to the political objective is how strategic thinkers achieve a better peace.

Although the war may end, the purpose of every military campaign ought to "gain leverage at the

peace table."[38] This discourse between Clausewitz and the Chief of the Prussian General Staff

served to illustrate the relevance of the political object in war.

The second useful criterion Clausewitz offered was how the strategist sees the whole

problem:

> …for it will primarily depend on such talent to illuminate the connections which link
> things together and to determine which among the countless concatenations of events
> are the essential ones.[39]

Dr. Alan Beyerchen argued that Clausewitz's description of war was similar to how

systems thinkers understand the interconnectedness of the world. Dr. Beyerchen explained

"environment itself evolves dynamically in response to the course of the war, with the changed

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[36] Clausewitz, 5-6.

[37] Ibid., 7.

[38] Dolman, 15.

[39] Clausewitz, 161. Emphasis in original.

context feeding back into the conduct of hostilities."[40] Generals that attempt to understand the whole problem seek to reshape the infinite connections to test their hypothesis of what might achieve a better peace.

Dr. Peter M. Senge highlights the utility of trying to understand complex problems when he wrote, "[u]ltimately, it *simplifies life* by helping us see the deeper patterns lying behind the events and the details."[41] In modern vernacular, Clausewitz's second criterion for measuring strategic thinking: does the strategist recognize the holistic, interdependent nature of the problem.

Carl von Clausewitz's theory of war thus provided two useful criteria by which to evaluate strategic thinking. First, does the strategist link policy to tactical and operational objectives? Second, does the strategist's approach seek to understand the holistic, interdependent nature of the problem? These two criteria explain how strategic thinking uses a theory for action and develops a plan of action to test the system.[42]

Historical Survey

Using the two criteria of primacy of policy and the nature of holistic, interdependent problems, this section reviews the generals in the U.S. Army as they increasingly grew to Emory Upton's vision of professionals through unlimited war, the progressive era, global war, and limited war. The current era of persistent conflict is too recent to provide more than a faint light to follow. This discussion reveals insight into how the most prominent general, as strategists, tackled the changes in the environment, forcing each American officer to change the rules to reshape the connections in a more favorable way for the United States. Each strategist challenges

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[40] Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security,* 17:2 (Winter, 1992), 90.

[41] Senge, 73.

[42] Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory For Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2011), 168.

the conventional wisdom found in the two assumptions the U.S. Army makes about the professional ethic.

An Amateur Army

Geography, humble beginnings, and general isolation allowed the United States to view war differently than the Old World Europeans. The tyranny of distance and time it took to get to the New World, as well as sparse population, enabled the United States to focus on domestic, economic, social, and political issues.[43] Major General William F. Burns explained, "[m]ilitary officers of the past were often amateurs at heart, brought up in an area of *noblesse oblige*, dedicated to military service because in their social class it was the thing to do."[44] Historically, the United States could make do with a smaller army, by depending on a small cadre of forces and filling up the ranks with state militias when war interrupted the growing nation. "[F]riendships, popularity, and politics rather than professional interests or abilities" characterized this entire process.[45]

The Mexican-American War, 1846-1848, represented this uniquely American approach to war – war as an interruption. On February 4, 1846, Colonel Zachary Taylor received orders to occupy a portion of disputed territory between Mexico and Texas.[46] An expansionist, President James K. Polk guided a limited war for limited means – one that the U.S. Army appeared inadequately prepared to conduct.[47] Unhappy with now Brevet General Taylor's performance,

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[43] Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: the American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 6-7.

[44] William F. Burns, "Education of "A Modern Major General," *Naval War College Review,* 23 accessed on January 21, 2012, at http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/navy/art2-w04.pdf.

[45] Ibid, 23.

[46] Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, ed. Louis Morton (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967), 172.

[47] Timothy D. Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army: the Mexico City Campaign* (Lawrence, Kan.: Univ Pr of Kansas, 2007), 13.

political aspirations, and concerned with domestic political implications, President Polk assigned General Winfield Scott to take command from Taylor.[48]

Although General Scott served as Commanding General of the United States Army, his ego often inhibited a respectful unequal dialogue with the President. In, an unequal dialogue about the strategic approach to conquering a better peace for the United States, Dr. Eliot Cohen has argued, "both sides expressed their views bluntly, indeed, sometimes offensively, and not once but repeatedly – and unequal, in that final authority of the civilian leader was unambiguous and unquestioned."[49] This understanding meant that military men carried out their political master's desires after an often-passionate discussion of the political object. This simple constraint established the conventional wisdom, and underlying assumption, that the U.S. Army should function apolitically – about the political objective without the politics of Washington.

The unequal dialogue represented between General Scott and Secretary of War Marcy illustrated that the general understood the primacy of politics and the fallacy of the U.S. Army's central assumption. The President seemed impressed that General Scott understood both the political and military objectives.[50] General Scott understood the implications of domestic politics and how those interests related to political object of war because of his proximity to the president, congress, and the secretary and participation in the discourse surrounding the Mexican-American War.

General Winfield Scott's campaign in 1847 against the Mexican government positively confirms the use of Dolman's definition and Clausewitz's criteria for limited wars towards limited objectives. Before entering the war, General Scott described America's problem as how to

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[48] Ibid., 12. Weigley explains in *History of the United States Army* on page 177 the political aspirations of Generals Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor.

[49] Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, 1st Anchor Books ed. (New York: Anchor, 2003), 209.

[50] Timothy D. Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army: the Mexico City Campaign* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 15.

threaten the Mexican government in such a way that will allow the United States to "conquer a peace."[51] General Scott's understanding of the context led him to a theory of victory in which by threatening Mexico City he could convince the Mexican government to sue for peace.

His direct approach upon Mexico City and the management of popular Mexican sentiment suggests an understanding of the infinite, interconnected whole problem of war.[52] Dr. Dorner explained, "[w]e must learn in complex systems we cannot do only one thing,"[53] because there are no clear rules or understanding of how the complete system interacts. General Scott implicitly understood that the war in Mexico could not only focus on the enemy's main force, the capital, or the political object. They were all connected. He created a new set of rules about how to use force to achieve the political object. General Scott proved that by threatening an enemy, by threatening the capture of Mexico City and respecting the populace simultaneously, he could operate deep within enemy territory and achieve a better peace for the United States.

In the years preceding the Civil War, Representative William Skelton observed that, "the officer corps had developed into a distinct subculture that was partially isolated both physically and intellectually, from the main currents of the civilian world."[54] Despite the U.S. Army's quasi-professional officer corps, amateurism prevailed in its study and application of strategic thinking. Technological, economic, and political forces, accelerated by experiences in the Mexican-American War, combined to necessitate a focus on tactical innovation over strategic concerns.[55] The size, cost, and logistical demands necessary to secure the westward expansion of the United

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[51] Winfield Scott, "Vera Cruz and Its Castle," in *Battles of America by Sea and Land, Vol. II: War of 1812 and Mexican Campaigns*, edited by Robert Tomes (New York: James S. Virtue, 1878), 614.

[52] General Winfield Scott's vision linked multiple tactical actions arranged on three Lines of Operation (LOO): a Northern LOO, an Eastern LOO, and a conceptual LOO to achieve strategic objectives. The combination of Naval, Land, and Isolating Population LOOs enable him to find positions of relative advantage and force the Mexican Government to cede California and sue for peace.

[53] Dorner, 198.

[54] William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: the Army Officer Corps, 1784-1861* (Lawrence, Kan.: Univ Pr of Kansas, 1993), 181.

[55] Abrahamsson, 17.

States necessitated a general staff.[56] However, the character of the all-volunteer force and General Scott's generalship in particular during the Mexican-American War did positively influence at least one future strategist, General Ulysses S. Grant.

Unlimited War

The Union policy, strategy, and distributed operations during the Civil War served to put the Clausewitzian criteria to the test. Dr. James M. McPherson argued that throughout the conflict the policy seemed clear: "The question of national sovereignty over the union of all the states was nonnegotiable."[57] Largely isolated from the implications of the French Revolution, the United States spared the United States from unlimited warfare.[58] Yet, if war was to serve policy, President Abraham Lincoln lacked an initial framework for connecting policy, strategic aims, and operations. Instead, he initially deferred strategy to his General-in-Chief Winfield Scott. Dr. McPherson explained:

> But Scott's advanced age, poor health, and lack of energy made it clear that he could not run this war. His successor, General George B. McClellan, proved an even greater disappointment to Lincoln. Nor did Gens. Henry W. Halleck, Don Carlos Buell, John Pope, Ambrose E. Burnside, Joseph Hooker, or William S. Rosecrans measure up to initial expectations.[59]

These U.S. Army officers struggled to understand the policy, the structure of the problem, and how to create a new approach. The old rules of warfare dominated their thinking. Their experiences as grand tacticians captured their thinking, revealing that they failed because of the primary assumption, of what it meant to be an apolitical army. In addition, the second assumptions failed to prove the fungibility of tactical experience to deal with strategic problems.

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[56] Skelton, 221.

[57] James M. McPherson, *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 6. President Lincoln lays out this policy by May 1861.

[58] Weigley, 197.

[59] McPherson, 8.

After eight generals, President Lincoln was finally able to find in General Grant a strategist that could interpret the complex systems at play between politics, strategy, operations, and tactical and technological innovation.[60]

The strategist finds a novel way to link action to purpose. As Lincoln sought reelection in 1864, he rediscovered a truth about why Americans fight. American's fight for causes that deserve the sacrifice of an American life. General Grant was the first general that Lincoln found that could implement his policies and develop strategies that matched those objectives. After eight weeks as commander of the entire military forces of the United States, Grant issued General Meade his order on April 9, 1865, "*Lee's* army will be your objective point. Wherever *Lee's* army goes you will go also."[61] He understood the precariousness of President Lincoln's position, politically and physically, in Washington. He acknowledged General Lee's tendencies and the strengths of his army. Grant interpreted Lincoln's policy, and the numerous military problems, into a singular objective: the destruction of Lee's field army.[62] The old rules of limited war for limited objectives would not work.

The Civil War represented one of three unlimited wars in the history of the United States. The primacy of policy appeared more obvious because often the conflict seemed well-structured with consensus easier to accomplish at the political level. President Lincoln's policy of the preservation of the Union remained unchanged throughout the Civil War. The Confederacy sought independence. Eight generals, anchored in their preconceived notions of the use of military force, could not envision a better peace and bridge policy to effective campaigns. The

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[60] J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship*, Second edition (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), 244.

[61] Fuller, 207.

[62] Ibid., 206-209.

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Union forces represented an amateur army, without a grand strategy – prolonging a costly, bloody war until General Grant.[63]

General Grant did possess an intellectual curiosity that allowed him to break past the cultural assumptions requisite for most of the U.S. Army. As J.F.C. Fuller explained,

> "He sees the war as a whole far more completely so than Lee ever saw it. His conceptions are simpler and less rigid; he is preeminently the grand-strategist, whilst Lee is preeminently the field strategian."[64]

His various experiences helped him grasp how the political, social, economic, and military systems interacted.[65] Entrepreneurial and innovative, Grant knew that neither the President nor the Army could provide additional assets to prosecute war with the South. Instead, Grant created new opportunities because he grasped the underlying political, social, economic subsystems. Grant's performance during the Civil War showed how strategists see more than the military problems of war, but ties the political - even the Presidency itself – to the military objective.

The Civil War changed the nation. A young, ambitious officer sought to change the U.S. Army based on his Civil War experiences. Colonel Emory Upton hated that the army was unprepared for modern warfare. He confused the failure by generals from Winfield Scott to William Rosecrans to grasp the primacy of Lincoln's policies with what he assumed to be an inappropriate civilian control of war. Despite Generals Grant's successes, the U.S. Army lacked a framework for gathering insights about why General Grant succeeded. In connecting policy and the engagements, President Lincoln closely monitored, controlled, and designed policies and often discussed tactics, operations, and strategy with General Grant.[66] Both President Lincoln and

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[63] Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 165-167. Fuller, 206-209.

[64] Fuller, *Grant and Lee*, 279.

[65] Grimsley, 165.

[66] Dorner, 171.

General Grant fought through the two central assumptions to create new theories for success. Unfortunately, Colonel Upton's opinions replaced the successes of the Lincoln-Grant team and cemented into conventional wisdom the assumptions of what it meant to be a professional officer by the time of Elihu Root's reforms during the Progressive era.

The Progressive Era

Industrialization foreshadowed the end of American isolationism necessitating a change in the role of the U.S. Army. Mass armies, shrinking distances, increased nationalism and the imperialist Old World hastened the need for professionalization of the force.[67] Moreover, the social and political forces *post bellum* resulted in state centralization that rationalized the Civil War as an unlimited war of, as Stephen Ambrose described, a "'power unrestrained' unleashed for complete 'conquest.'"[68] The broad nature of the conflict influenced the political, social, and economic environments resulting in fertile ground for rooting the conventional wisdom of a bifurcated relationship between policy-making and the U.S. Army.

Samuel P. Huntington's "normal-theory" relationship between the generals and their political-masters resulted from the assumptions of what a professional army meant.[69] Once again, the first assumption was that an apolitical army represented a more professional force. The second assumption was that the problems at the tactical and operational level were similar enough to be useful in solving problems at the strategic level.

Emory Upton embodied the reformation of the U.S. military policy, yet it would be a few more years before men like John Bigelow, James Mercur, and the ever thoughtful Arthur L.

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[67] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Upton and the Army*, Reprinted on Demand by University Microfilms International, Louisiana paperback ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Pr, 1964), 106.

[68] Weigley, 253.

[69] Cohen, 4-7. Samuel P. Huntington suggested the theory of "objective control" which holds that the healthiest, most effective way of civilian control of the military is that which maximizes professionalism by isolating soldiers from politics, and giving them as free a hand as possible in military matters in his book *The Soldier and the State*.

Wagner would examine military strategy. The sequence in the development of military policy first and then military strategy separated the relationship between policy and war for the U.S. Army. Among the arguments that Upton presented in *The Military Policy of the United States,* "was a complete independence of the General-in-chief – and thereby the army – from civilian control."[70] Upton's goal was to create an autonomous professional Army. Unintentionally, he created an apolitical U.S. Army officer corps desirous of autonomy in operations often described as a "political-free zone" of war.[71]

Dr. Lloyd Matthews writes, "[a]lthough considered by 'the most influential writer-reformer-soldier this country has yet produced,' Emory Upton's concepts completely disregard the democratic principles and civilian control of the U.S. Army.[72] President Lincoln's influence over every single level of war led Upton to believe that allowing amateur, uneducated civilians to control the Army was unethical. Upton discovered the German way of war and felt that their model, an autonomous professional army once politicians declared war, made more sense than the U.S. democratic model. President Lincoln's influence across every level of war during both limited and unlimited war proves that the principle of primacy of policy remains useful for the United States theory of war.[73] Emory Upton introduced a flawed assumption, revealed by Germany's strategic performance in two world wars, that an apolitical army meant a professional army.

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[70] Ambrose, 131.

[71] Gray, 146. Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy* (Carlisle, PA, Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2009). The authors argue that the operational level of war served to create a politics-free level of warfare.

[72] Don Snider and Lloyd Matthews, *The Future of the Army Profession, Revised and Expanded Second Edition* (Boston: Learning Solutions, 2005), 66.

[73] McPherson, 267.

General William Tecumseh Sherman and Emory Upton developed a close relationship based on their mutual respect, admiration, and shared experiences.[74] General Sherman, an ardent friend and supporter, surprised no one when he began the professionalization process by establishing the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry in 1881 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.[75] Later, in 1904, Elihu Root had Emory Upton's *The Military Policy of the United States* published.[76] The Army has long recognized Elihu Root as the turning point towards professional military education, institutions, with limited recognition of Upton's fundamental desire to isolate military operations from "excessive civilian control of the military."[77]

Elihu Root described the origins of the modern U.S. Army in the preface to *The Military Policy of the United States*:

> [Upton] recommended the three-battalion formation in cavalry and infantry regiments. He recommended interchangeable service in staff and line against permanence of staff departments. He recommended examination as a condition of promotion. He recommended the establishment of the General Staff, and he recommended the general and systemic extension of military education.[78]

General Upton's desire to create a modern, professional army, preferring "the old methods, when violence had been monopolized by regular armies, while civilians – including Presidents and Secretaries of War – had watched, respectfully from a distance."[79] The unintended consequence of the Progressive era led to an Army designed to artificially separate policy and war.[80] In splitting war from policy by professionalization, Upton's design led military strategy to

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[74] Ambrose, 76.

[75] Ambrose, 151-153. Matheny, 22.

[76] Ambrose, 155.

[77] Weigley, 279.

[78] Emory Upton, *The Military Policy of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), xiii.

[79] Ambrose, 134.

[80] Paul Yingling, comment on "The Best Defense," The Best Defense Blog, comment posted February 14, 2012,

concern itself with organization, technology, firepower, and promotions driven by bureaucratic needs above the political concerns of the nation.[81]

This approach led to the first assumption of professionalizing the U.S. Army, that an apolitical officer is more professional for the republic. This concept came to mean that an army officer does not get ahead of one's political masters, but also that officers executed political objectives. That clearly made sense to the republic, then and now. The problem with the assumption is that war is politics by other means.[82] The U.S. Army must remain nonpartisan. However, it cannot be apathetic about the discussion of the political object. The logic lacked credibility for the German army as well as the American army.[83]

This second deeply rooted assumption is that the best U.S. Army grand tacticians can convert their experiences into effective strategic thinking. However, the logic of the professional system resulted in officers that have, as Dr. Matthews highlighted, "identical career paths [and] interchangeable experiences and views of the world,"[84] divorced from political discourse. Army officers arrive unprepared to start a discussion about the political object. The unstated assumption that Upton designed into the professional military education system, as Lt. Col. Michael H. Cody explained, "is that if officers were paragons at lower levels, they will automatically be able to meet the demands of higher levels – no matter how different such demands might be from those encountered earlier."[85]

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http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/13/despite_the_myths_there_is_no_such_thing_as_winning_militarily_and_losing_political?page=1 (accessed February 15, 2012).

[81] Snider, 73.

[82] Clausewitz, 87.

[83] Harold R. Winton and David R. Mets, eds., *The Challenge of Change: Military Institutions and New Realities, 1918-1941* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 64.

[84] Ibid., 75.

[85] Michael H. Cody, "Selecting and Developing the Best Leaders," in *Building and Maintaining Healthy Organizations,* ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, January 2001), 103 accessed http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA430598 on January 22, 2012.

The problems at the operational and increasingly at the tactical levels fit into a proven approach that allows leaders to impose rules or structure upon them. Whereas, at the strategic level, the problems introduce a paradox – the higher the level the more constraints are self-imposed. War occurs because of a breakdown in the system; a strategist, as Dr. Jamshid Gharajedaghi explained, has "the opportunity to recreate the system from a clean slate."[86] Higher-level commands constrain lower-level commands. The admixture of policy forces the strategists to deal with problems that are wholly new and ill-structured.

Upton's model for professionalizing the U.S. Army led to converting these two assumptions into conventional wisdom. Generals Scott and Grant were able to create new solutions because they understood the primacy of policy and envisioned their respective environments as holistic, interdependent systems. Upton's transferred German approach to war left long-enduring assumptions that bifurcated the United States' approach to war.

Global War

The disconnect between the military policy of a standing army and its purpose served to institutionalize a bureaucracy that, necessarily, struggled with the contextual goal of self-preservation and the goal of being prepared to win the full-spectrum of the nation's wars.[87] Dr. Andrew Bacevich argued that the Root reforms "themselves were indistinguishable from the main thrust of Progressivism."[88] The thrust of the Root reforms included a War Department General

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[86]Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: a Platform For Designing Business Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, MA.: Morgan Kaufmann, 2011), 144.

[87] James Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do And Why They Do It* (Basic Books, 1989), 349.

[88] Andrew J. Bacevich, Jr., "Progressivism, Professionalism, and Reform," *Parameters, Journal of the US Army War College* (Vol. IX, No. 1), 67, http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA515061 (accessed on January 27, 2012).

Staff system, a National Guard in being, military education, and technical matters.[89] For the Army, supplanting the amateur Army with a more professional force also meant replacing the system of political-military discourse long established by General George Washington, reinforced by Generals Scott and Grant.[90]

A discussion of General George C. Marshall's insights demonstrates what worked despite the systemic belief in those two central assumptions about Upton's professionalism. Driven, intelligent, inquisitive, and pragmatic, young Marshall entered the Virginia Military Institute on the cusp of the Root reforms and from humble beginnings.[91] Before Marshall's selection to the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1906, George C. Marshall served in independent and challenging roles across the United States and the Philippines. Dr. Forrest C. Pogue explained that Marshall's formal and informal education taught him to apply thought to military problems in place of traditional language of regulations.[92] He learned early-on to break and re-write rules to solve complex, ill-structured military problems.

Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell introduced the students at Leavenworth to enlightened military thinkers like Colonel Arthur L. Wagner, Major John F. Morrison, and Captain Matthew F. Steele, military men that Army conservatives found "unmilitary…to write books."[93] Marshall felt he had "learned how to learn."[94] This life-long approach to learning allowed Marshall to develop and test his hypotheses across a broad range of subjects. At least Marshall seemed to grasp the paradox of how to see the whole problem, connect it to policy, and create new solutions.

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[89] Weigley, 322. Bacevich, 67. Matheny, 20-22. For further inquiry into development of U.S. strategy and tactics before World War I, continue reading on page 27.

[90] Weigley, 292. Dr. Weigley describes this political separation as emancipation for officers, free to concentrate "on things military."

[91] Forrest C. Pogue, *Education of a General, 1880-1939*, 1st ed., Vol. 1 of *George C. Marshall* (New York: Viking Adult, 1963), 40-43.

[92] Ibid., 98.

[93] Ibid., 94.

[94] Ibid., 101.

After all, he would initiate the Marshall Plan, serve as Secretary of State, and lobby for the firing of General Douglas MacArthur. His career reflected a rare genius.

The United States Army's unpreparedness for war and economic mobilization exemplified the fallacy of Upton's assumptions, in particular a careless approach to preparing for imminent war despite the political rhetoric.[95] The immediate, the tactical, and the technical problems reflected the attitude of professionalism in the War Department and its relationship with the polity. Marshall recognized these failures expressly as "the birth of an army, the procurement of materiel and detachments for its services from virtually every point in France not occupied by the enemy, and the plunging of this huge infant into the greatest battle in which American troops had ever engaged."[96]

On the morning of Friday, April 6, 1917, the United States finally entered the war with an Army unprepared. Despite the professionalization of the force, the ongoing hostilities in Mexico, and the fact that World War I began in 1914, the Army "possessed no plan for how America might contribute to the Allies, how an expeditionary force might be organized, or even how the War Department itself might be expanded."[97] Intelligent and pragmatic, George C. Marshall faced a number of ill-structured problems in terms of logistics, force projection, and relationships that the operational problems at Fort Leavenworth failed to address in training or education. Embarrassed by the First Division's entrance to France, Marshall recorded, "Certainly they gathered the impression that we understood nothing of the military business, since this division was supposed to be the pick of the Regular Army, and yet it looked like the rawest of territorial units."[98] Marshall was different, though. He seemed to grasp the idea of starting from a clean

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[95] Weigley, 352. Again, Weigley blames the U.S. policy, but the Army War Department cannot remain blameless.

[96] Marshall, 128.

[97] Ibid., 140.

[98] Ibid., 15.

slate, ignoring every constraint, to introduce innovative solutions to problems like the St. Mhiel offensive.

However, Marshall revealed a flash of American ingenuity during the St. Mihiel offensive. Lt. Col. Marshall was driven and well-educated in General Grant's campaigns by Capt. Steele at Fort Leavenworth. Lt. Col. Marshall, serving as a planner in General Pershing's First Army, invoked the image of dealing with ill-structured problems as he contemplated the repositioning of the First Army from the St. Mihiel offensive fight to the opening of the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

> I remember thinking during this walk that I could not recall an incident in history where the fighting of one battle had been proceeded by the plans for a later battle to be fought by the same army on a different front, and involving the issuing of orders for the movement of troops already destined to participate in the first battle, directing their transfer to the new field of action. There seemed no precedent for such a course, and therefore, no established method for carrying it out.[99]

Ever positive, reflective, and willing to challenge assumptions, Marshall diligently explained that the only way to "begin is to commence," and after one hour developed a systemic approach to move First Army, engaged in combat in one area of operations into opening a wholly new area of operations. Lt. Col. Marshall exhibited critical and creative thinking during World War I.

Although Marshall's problem fits somewhere between grand tactics and operational art, it highlights what strategic thinking does for an operational planner. First, Marshall searches for a historic campaign by which to draw implications. Second, finding no relevant campaigns, he recognizes that he has a clean slate. There are no constraints except technological feasibility and operational viability.[100] Finally, he takes a walk to mull through several iterations based on those two constraints and adopts a solution that no allied strategist had previously attempted.

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[99] Ibid., 137-138.

[100] Gharajedaghi, 144-145.

The German model of bifurcated approach to war – the model adapted by Upton and Root during the Progressive era – proved unequal to global war.[101] The tacit recognition by Mr. Martin van Creveld that "World War I drove home the lesson that there was more to armed conflict than simply fighting in the field" remained largely unsettled through the thirties.[102] The development of an operational level of war emerged from that lesson.

Framed by the nation's geostrategic position with two ocean's separation from the rest of the world, the United States interwar period was dominated by, as Dr. Michael Matheny explained, "how to project, conduct, and sustain military operations in a distant theater of war."[103] The implication was that those performing at the higher levels of war needed preparation to merge van Creveld's "military, political, economic, and technological affairs" of the state.[104] The split firmly forced the Chief of Staff of the Army, as Dr. Thomas Parrish recognized, "out of the military sphere into realms concerned with purely political questions."[105] Therefore, modern warfare created a need for an operational level of war to train for large, complicated unit operations, campaigns, and "the art of concentrating superior combat power in a theater of operations."[106]

Naturally, in the conduct of war bias tends to the superiority of tactics, "[w]here tactical and strategic considerations conflict [because] gaining of decision in combat is of primary

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[101] Winton, xvii.

[102] Martin van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: from Military Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: Free Pr, 1990), 82.

[103] Michael R. Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy: American Operational Art to 1945* (Norman, Okla.: Univ of Oklahoma Pr, 2011), 44.

[104] Creveld, 83.

[105] Thomas Parrish, *Roosevelt and Marshall: Partners in Politics and War* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1989), 80.

[106] United States Army, *Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Command and General Staff School Press, 1936), 7.

importance."[107] George C. Marshall allegedly said, "It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefields. I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping-out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills."[108] Marshall's sentiments illustrate the second assumption about professionalization that the U.S. Army generally failed to recognize – the skills gained at the tactical and operational levels of war are not completely fungible at the strategic and political levels of war.[109] Dr. Doerner explained that "'[s]trategic thinking'…demands a far greater expenditure of mental energy than does thinking that uses a single principle."[110]

At the strategic level of war, the generals that follow intuition so painfully gained at the tactical and operational level fail because they lack the ability to differentiate the constraints imposed at the lower level from those imposed on the whole problem of war. Emory Upton's professional concept – eliminating politics from the Army by professionalizing the force – continued to plague the United States and the Army beyond World War II. In a strange paradox, the success of World War II reinforced the two assumptions. Despite Marshall's sentiments of being a political general, the U.S. Army begin confusing apolitical and understanding the political object of war as Clausewitz meant it.

The United States found itself with significant international political initiative at the conclusion of World War II. The U.S. Army essentially governed Germany, Japan, and several

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[107] Harold W. Nelson, "The Origins of Operational Art," in *Historical Perspectives of Operational Art*, edited by Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2005), 340.

[108] U.S. Army War College, *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3rd Edition*, edited by Colonel (Ret) Stephen J. Gerras, Ph.D. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Department of Command, Leadership and Management, 2010, 1.

[109] Parrish, 80. Gray, 61.

[110] Doerner, 187.

smaller nations in between.[111] Acting as the world's police force, with an emerging existential threat from Communism, the U.S. Army struggled with an identity within the strategy of containment.

Limited War

General Jack D. Ripper, a fictional general in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb,* quipped, "…do you recall what Clemenceau said about war? He said war was too important to be left to the generals. When he said that, fifty years ago, he might have been right. But today, war is too important to be left to the politicians. They have neither the time, the training, or the inclination for strategic thought."[112] Ripper's statement provides insight into the characterization of military professionals during the Cold War. Professionalism, especially acute for the Army throughout the Cold War, prevented U.S. Army generals from presenting little more than "a preparation of options, and sometimes a single option, for the civilian leadership," Dr. Cohen observed.[113]

Limited wars demand more discourse about the aims of policy. The conventional wisdom of apolitical bias confused generals about this discourse. Instead of acknowledging the necessity of a nonpartisan force – U.S. Army professionals opted to remain apolitical in all facets. The fear of all out nuclear war left a gap in thinking. Professionalism defined by apolitical, grand tacticians precluded discussion about bridging from the political aim to strategic action. Operational artists presented options based on technical, expert execution of strike and counterstrike. The high threshold for nuclear war left generals unprepared to deal with the reality

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[111] Snider, 101.

[112] Cohen, 13.

[113] Ibid., 200.

of limited war. The doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction meant everything else in a bipolar world fit into limited war.

Upton's model of a professional Army ingrained the two assumptions with significant consequences in the cold war era. As Colin Gray observed of this period "[t]oday we can review, appalled, the conduct of the nuclear arms competition in the great East-West Cold War (1947-1989)."[114] George F. Kennan's policy of containment presented many military strategists with a completely new problem.[115] Henry Kissinger wrote that during the Cold War America "engaged in an ideological, political, and strategic struggle with the Soviet Union in which a two-powered world operated according to principles quite different from those of a balance-of-power system."[116] The assumption was that the preservation of the status quo prevented Mutually Assured Destruction.

The Army's framework for the Cold War meant wrestling with tensions of a global nature that, as Mr. Ingo Trauschweizer detailed, "demanded general-purpose forces that could be deployed to fight" anywhere in the world to deal with limited war.[117] *A Report to the National Security Council – NSC 68* framed the nature of the Cold War in relatively simplistic terms of "good and evil."[118] President Dwight D. Eisenhower adapted the Truman approach focusing instead on a technological, fiscally conservative vision of war. According to then Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the central problem facing the United States was how to make deterrence work below the threshold for thermonuclear war.[119] President Eisenhower's vision,

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[114] Gray, 253.

[115] Richard Rumelt, *Good Strategy / Bad Strategy* (London: Profile Books, 2011), 82.

[116] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 22.

[117] Ingo Trauschweizer, *The Cold War U.S. Army: Building Deterrence For Limited War* (Lawrence, KS.: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 1.

[118] Lewis, 76.

[119] Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: the History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 74.

shaped by his experiences during World War II, centered on air power and nuclear weapons, delivered an impetus for fundamental change in the Army. The Army's operating concept developed into an acceptance that limited war would include tactical nuclear weapons as a viable alternative for land power.[120] Fortunately, the concept was never tested.

The primacy of policy is fundamental to all wars, but becomes even more critical and challenging in limited war. Limited war means that the ends, ways, or means are indeed limited – usually for political reasons rather than resources. The fear of nuclear war meant that escalation was an ever present danger and therefore violence had to be carefully managed or controlled to avoid the obvious catastrophe of unlimited war involving nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, during the Cold War, Mr. Trauschweizer described a Defense Department, grounded in the assumption that first assumption of an apolitical force, never entertained a political discourse about what limited war meant and blurred the difference between Clausewitz's meaning and the nonpartisan aspect of professionalism. Locking in the first assumption as conventional wisdom.

The Army, for example, interpreted limited war by what it was not. Limited war was anything short of nuclear war. Defense department officials, Mr. Traushweizer argued, categorized limited war as counter-insurgency warfare and scholars "thought in terms of a conflict such as [the] Korean War, where political objectives were limited and use of nuclear weapons was avoided."[121] The various perceptions of limited war remained through much of the Cold War.

The various systems that the United States adopted including self-imposed constraints, created a period of strategic drift in which the Army struggled to find purpose. The United States was extremely powerful, wealthy, with significant conventional forces. The ideological struggle with the former Soviet Union is a category of limited wars for unlimited ends. Political discourse

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[120] Trauschweizer, 2.

[121] Ibid., 2.

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over strategic and operational objectives, within the context of the strategy of containment, imploded in Vietnam. Bad policy that Clausewitz believed as jointly owned by generals and a politician begets bad strategy. Good operational art, good theater strategy, cannot resolve bad policy and that lesson became painfully obvious after General Creighton Abrams all-to-late operational successes in Vietnam.

Even during the Cold War, general officers emerged who fundamentally understood strategic thinking and how to connect military action to political objectives. General Creighton Abrams prosecuted "the one war concept," to help connect the political aims to operations in Vietnam, within the greater context of containment and the Cold War.[122] The pressures of the Vietnam War in 1968, as General Abrams assumed command, represented what Peter Senge described as "*dynamic complexity*, situations where cause and effect are subtle, and where the effects over time of interventions are not obvious."[123] General Abrams based his understanding on the Army staff study *A Program for the Pacification and Long-Term Development of South Vietnam* (PROVN Study) conducted in 1966.[124] The PROVEN report introduced an exceptional framework for understanding the operational environment that General Abrams entered.

According to the then Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) – Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., General Abrams' one war concept "puts equal emphasis on military operations, improvement of RVNAF [Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces] and pacification," connecting three interconnected, interrelated systems.[125] Moreover, Abrams seemed to understand the importance of building a shared understanding with Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, at the United States Embassy in Vietnam, because he sought to form a close relationship with Bunker.

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[122] Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and the Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999), 17.

[123] Senge, 71.

[124] Lewis, 287. Sorley, 17.

[125] Sorley, 18.

Apparently, he felt so strongly that Abrams remarked, "[i]f you can't get along with the ambassador, there's no sense in your being here."[126] Abrams was clearly doing everything possible to reshape the strategy that Westmoreland pursued during the Vietnam War away from killing more enemy to "achieve our fundamental allied objective: an independent South Vietnam, free to determine your own future."[127]

General Abrams succeeded in developing an innovative approach because he saw the interdependence of ends, ways, and means.[128] The "one war" concept served to link the "previously fragmented approaches to combat operations, pacification, and mentoring the South Vietnamese armed forces."[129] By developing a cogent and understandable desired state, General Abrams enabled the rest of Military Assistance Command – Vietnam (MAC-V) education of their enemy. Abrams understood that in war "there is more to the *problem*, there is more involved in the war, than just that [military] part."[130] General Abrams' holistic approach hoped to link political aims to operational objectives within his theater of operations – unfortunately, his operational successes were too late for Washington.

Thinking gave Abrams' command a chance to understand the enemy and the environment from a strategic perspective. Strategic thinking helped the command see how the various enemy systems interacted and connect limited means to the limited objectives before the American forces left South Vietnam. General Abrams' analysis of these systems revealed high leverage and payoff systems, explained Mr. Lewis Sorley, "[w]ith respect to South Vietnam, the agenda grew to include pacification, expansion of territorial forces, manpower issues, economic reform,

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[126] Ibid., 19

[127] Ibid., 28.

[128] Cohen, 20. Rumelt, 92.

[129] Sorley, 5.

[130] Ibid., 69.

elections, and refuge assistance."[131] The admixture of politics makes limited wars complex, ill-structured problems. The primacy of domestic politics, despite Abrams operational and tactical successes, prevented the United States from winning in Vietnam. Operational success cannot overcome years of bad policy and bad strategy.

The power of systems thinking allowed MAC-V to develop a holistic way of looking at the elusive North Vietnamese forces flowing into South Vietnam. An overreliance on technological solutions and an unstructured approach to destroying the North Vietnamese forces prevented General William C. Westmoreland's MAC-V from understanding the enemy's movement down the Ho Chi Minh trail.[132] Lewis Sorley's first hand accounts illuminate Abrams' holistic approach that imposed structure and increased understanding of how MAC-V understood the enemy's campaigns into South Vietnam. Use of metaphor, as in the enemy's "logistics nose" helped others develop rules of thumb for grasping insight into when and why the enemy attacked.

The U.S. Army's defeat in Vietnam served as an impetus for change. The intellectual approach that General Creighton Abrams fostered in MAC-V found fertile soil in future leaders such as William E. DuPuy and Donn Albert Starry. General DuPuy established the Army Training and Doctrine Command in July 1973 to develop "new technology, new doctrine, new training, and a new sense of professionalism" for the U.S. Army.[133] General Starry worked alongside DuPuy to develop the "Active Defense" theory of operations from the 1976 edition of Field Manual 100-5, Operations and subsequent development of the "AirLand Battle" doctrine first published in 1982.[134] These generals distinguished their approach to warfare by challenging assumptions and developing holistic solutions, while remaining nonpartisan in the political

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[131] Ibid., 33.

[132] Ibid., 47.

[133] Lewis, 300.

[134] Starry, Donn A., *PRESS ON! Selected Works of General Donn A. Starry Volume II,* ed. Lewis Sorley (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), 731. Ibid., 301.

discourse. They understood Clausewitz's meaning of the political object and remained apolitical in the right way.

General Starry, then serving as Commander, V Corps, outlined his hypothesis and subsequent examination of the Active Defense theory of operations in a memorandum to various members and stakeholders in the Army. Using Israeli experiences during the Yom Kippur War as context, General Starry explained his belief that with current doctrine, organization, technology, and in particular, tactical nuclear weapons, "we've probably got it pretty well wrong."[135] By this point, the U.S. Army had spent nearly three decades struggling with the concept of tactical nuclear weapons. In his first year, as V Corps commander, General Starry began testing his theory of victory at the tactical and operational levels of war. Ultimately, Starry leveraged his experiences and developed a sense of urgency in the U.S. Army to solve flawed doctrine and organization, resulting in the 1982 AirLand Battle Doctrine as a theory for defeating the Soviet technology and doctrine.[136]

General Starry's approach illustrates strategic thinking. He clearly grasps the whole problem and begins learning. He then tests various hypotheses and shares the insights gained from those experiments across the Army. Finally, he describes a new set of rules in AirLand Battle Doctrine that arguably reinvented the U.S. Army.

General Starry understood the primacy of policy and the natural tensions that exist between the political, military, economic, and social systems. His recognition of these dynamic interactions between the whole did not prevent him from acting on them. General Abrams had inculcated a sense of learning in his iron majors.[137] General Starry explained to a gathered group of officers after his retirement:

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[135] Starry, 732.

[136] Ibid., 760, 762. Lewis, 302-303.

[137] Ibid., 898 – 901.

"Throughout this, I have tried to convince you that things don't change much. I'm sure that one of you standing here some years from now will be telling a story somewhat like mine. But things do change, and there has been a revolution in progress."[138]

The trends from General Scott, Grant, Marshall, Abrams, and Starry reflect successful strategic thinking. Their commonalities embody Clausewitz's description of genius. The strategists in this historical survey created new approaches to solve unprecedented problems.[139] The reason this matters at all levels of war, as General Starry points out, is because warfare's complexity has grown exponentially. The made certain assumptions about their role in the nature of political discourse during wars. The admixture of policy changes the nature of strategic problems. Each of these generals perceived, identified, and changed the rules based on their understanding of the political, strategic, or operational goal.

In the current era characterized by persistent conflict, perhaps there are observations worth exploring in the current discussion of professionalism. The two assumptions still engender a vitriolic response to political discourse and the linear thinking that grand tacticians begat operational artist begat strategists. General Abrams performance during the Vietnam War highlights that even genius at the operational level cannot ensure winning a war. The ability to generate discourse between policy and strategy, Dr. Cohen's unequal dialogue, suggests a route to better approaches.

Conclusions

Donald A Schoen argued that the "question of professional education needs to be turned upside down."[140] The previous historical surveys reflect how professionalization, especially the two assumptions about strategic thinking, led to a bifurcated approach to war. The conventional wisdom drew from the assumptions of Upton's analysis and bias. In review, those were first, that

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[138] Ibid., 902.

[139] Marshall, 138.

[140] Schoen, 14.

an apolitical army represented a more professional force and second, that the problems at the tactical and operational level were similar enough to be useful in solving problems at the strategic level. These assumptions may be useful at the lower levels of war, but become meaningless the closer one gets to policy aims because of the admixture of politics.

The U.S. Army focused on important tactical problems at the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The professionalization and specialization process unintentionally supplanted the political-military discourse long established by Generals George Washington, Winfield Scott, and Ulysses S. Grant. The Root reforms left a legacy that strangled strategic thinking in the U.S. Army through World War I, highlighted by the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) civilian-free view of war. The U.S. Army, somewhat embarrassed by the AEF's performance during WWI, turned to the Army War College "to train officers for joint operations of the army and navy; and to instruct in the strategy, tactics, and logistics of large operations with special reference to the world war."[141] The impetus for change determined by the realities of WWI forced War College students "to do their work on the basis of hypotheses."[142] "Leavenworth was about training; the War College about education."[143] The military education system helped the Army develop systems for projecting, conducting, and sustaining large-scale operations because of the theoretical structure that caused General George C. Marshall so much concern.[144] The military school system contributed to understanding joint operations by linking tactical art to strategy, but it was General Marshall's strategic insight and willingness to operate within the political mechanisms in Washington that proved consequential.

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[141] Matheny, 254.

[142] Gole, 28.

[143] Matheny, 57.

[144] Ibid., 268-269, 259.

The strategy-tactics paradox ensures the natural tension between training officers for war and educating in political process. Part of the problem is that strategy is more important to conduct than tactics, as Dr. Cohen asserts, "if only because the latter has to derive its meaning and purpose from the former."[145] Tactics, doctrine, and technology have a longer lead-time than does strategy. Correcting a bad strategy is relatively easier – retraining an Army takes years. The paradox, Cohen argues, is that "[s]trategy as currency conversion is inherently problematic."[146]

The military school system did enable an institutionalization of education and promotion. The U.S. Army developed a golden strait jacket of conformity in the shadow of the atomic bomb and the real promise of decisive strategic airpower.[147] Specialization led to career tracks that narrowed perspective for future general officers and unintentionally created what Maj. Gen. Laich described as, a "culture of conformity."[148] The Cold War, deterrence, the resumption of peacetime inter-service rivalry led to one of Mr. Senge's reinforcing systems with promotion as the only incentive. A tactical bias developed in the U.S. Army that unintentionally led to the less intellectual, less vocal, and less strategically minded officer. The unresolved cognitive dilemma left to General Donn Starry derived from an ill-structured, complex problem about how to defeat the Russian hordes resulted in a poorly conceived Active Defense doctrine. War is, after all, the ultimate intellectual and political challenge.

The successful generals understood that military operations represented only part of the problem. War's complexity derives from its inherent struggle between two thinking entities pursuing competing objectives. Clausewitz's wrestling metaphor emphasizes the physical dimension while minimizing the cognitive, thinking dimension. The wrestling metaphor

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[145] Cohen, 197.

[146] Ibid., 135.

[147] Matheny, 266.

[148] Dennis Laich, MG (Ret.) and LTC (Ret.) Mike Young, "The Million Dollar Muzzle: A Follow-up to Yingling," DefensePolicy.org, August 8, 2011, http://www.defensepolicy.org/author/laich-young (accessed October 3, 2011).

minimizes the complexity and interaction between competing and self-imposed systems. The successful generals grasped the primacy of policy concepts. Successful generals understood the interaction of the various political, military, economic, and social systems. Thinking critically and creatively enabled these strategists to learn about these systems, recognize opportunities, innovate, communicate points of advantage, and create organizational adaptations based on well-constructed hypotheses for victory. The U.S. Army did develop at least one effective strategic thinker a generation, but General Galvin's central question remains: "how many strategic thinkers does the army need?"[149]

Recommendations

David Cloud and Greg Jaffe in *The Fourth Star* describe the U.S. Army's contemporary struggle to identify, develop, and promote strategic thinkers. Through their story, Cloud and Jaffe provide a narrative of the service and lives of Generals John Abizaid, George Casey, Jr., Peter Chiarelli, and David Petraeus. As Cloud and Jaffe analyze these generals, by the conclusion, it is obvious in their minds that only one general officer represents the future of the U.S. Army, General David Petraeus. By every single account, each of the general officers achieves success, but only General Petraeus approaches problems holistically, systemically, and politically. Only one of the four general officers is "tough enough" to think in public, challenge institutional assumptions, and remain intellectually engaged.[150] As Col. Yingling writes:

> America's generals have repeated the mistakes of Vietnam in Iraq….The intellectual and moral failures common in America's general officer corps in Vietnam and Iraq constitute a crisis in American generalship.[151]

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[149] Galvin, 84.

[150] Greg Jaffe and David Cloud, *The Fourth Star: Four Generals and the Epic Struggle For the Future of the United States Army* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2010), 295.

[151] Yingling, 2.

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Col. Paul Yingling's words close *The Fourth Star* to illustrate the direction the U.S. Army can go. General Chiarelli, speaking to the newest group of charm school brigadiers, quotes Col. Yingling, attempting to build an adaptive capacity, one random general at a time. "'Isn't this the kind of officer we want in our Army?' he asked. 'He's passionate, intelligent, and engaged.'"[152] There are at least two relevant approaches to developing passionate, intelligent, and engaged officers: the command track route and the non-command track route.

The command track leverages the U.S. Army's current tactical bias and culture. The U.S. Army has the dual responsibility to promote the requisite tacticians needed to lead tactical commands and contribute to the political discourse on behalf of the land component. That may not be the fairest way to express the false dichotomy of serving soldiers or promoting strategic thinking. Fundamentally, the U.S. Army must accept that the skills garnered at the tactical and operational levels do not always translate effectively at the strategic and political levels.[153] General Marshall's experiences show a way of teaching officers how to learn to learn.

The current incentives preclude any other route to generalship because the narrow command track will continue to provide the officers selected for strategic roles. Therefore, the U.S. Army must introduce strategy and strategic thinking earlier in an officer's education with a curriculum structured around appropriate touchstone concepts such as campaigning, the primacy of policy, holistic thinking, and innovation.

Jaffe's compelling conclusion that the Army can produce one or two strategically minded officers each generation resonates through this analysis. Candor is no longer an espoused Army trait, but General Chiarelli seemed to recognize what his mentor meant by being tough because

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[152] Jaffe, 295.

[153] Dolman, 14.

the future Army needs an officer corps that argues, debates, and takes intellectual risks.[154] The Root reforms highlighted the strategy-tactics paradox and naturally assumed risk in strategic thinking and strategy. If the U.S. Army wants to develop more strategically minded commanders then it must inculcate an intellectually "tough enough" culture.[155]

Without question, the Army must maintain the functional area strategists (59s) as a non-command track program dedicated to building competent strategists that can deconstruct the assumptions necessary for tactical and operational professionalism. The non-command track route seeks to develop proficiency through contact with the interagency, institutional, and joint billets with a focused approach to improve holistic thinking and analysis. The logic of assignments and education should explicitly reflect the Army's need for strategic thinkers capable of mentoring, coaching, and guiding senior decision makers.

The risk in the non-command track approach is that it goes against Army culture. Jaffe's right – the Army does not tolerate officers that are prepared to argue, debate, and take intellectual risk.[156] These American generals forced discourse. They accepted responsibility. They sought risk. They solved problems instead of fighting the problem. The crisis in strategic thinking in the U.S. Army can best be framed through Scott, Grant, Marshall, Abrams, and maybe Petraeus.

These successful strategists built a holistic understanding of the problem to understand how and why the rules changed – and the potential desired future state. The U.S. Army may not be ready to start teaching strategic thinking. Especially if it means breaking conventional wisdom, because the best strategists break all the rules.

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[154] The Army espoused values are LDRSHIP: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. Jaffe, 295.

[155] Jaffe, 295. Gray, 204. Ricks, 92.

[156] Jaffe, 295.

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